DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 416 589 EA 028 920

AUTHOR	Riley, Richard W.
TITLE	Education First: Building America's Future. The Fifth Annual State of American Education Speech, Seattle, Washington.
INSTITUTION	Department of Education, Washington, DC. Office of the Secretary.
PUB DATE	1998-02-17
NOTE	12p.
AVAILABLE FROM	World Wide Web: http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/980217.html
PUB TYPE	Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; Children; *Educational Assessment; Educational Environment; Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; Literacy; Middle Schools; Preschool Education; Public Education; Public Schools; *School Community Relationship

ABSTRACT

Public education in the United States faces many challenges. Ways in which districts are meeting these challenges are discussed in this State of American Education speech given by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. After providing an overview of American education, with mention of reading scores, drug use, the Hispanic dropout rate, evaluating student achievement, interest in the arts, higher academic standards, gender equality, and the opportunities awaiting in public education, highlights of various issues in education are offered. These topics include the importance of early childhood development, efforts at improving national literacy, reducing class sizes in elementary schools, modernizing schools with an ambitious school construction initiative, public support for voluntary national tests, how vouchers divide and undermine public education, the fallacy of "either/or" thinking and how improved mathematics instruction can promote logical thinking, middle school as a turning point in students' lives, and the need to create new partnerships for public schools and higher education. A renewed focus on collaboration among all levels of education is urged, and examples of programs that foster interchange and equity are presented. (RJM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 416 589

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by
U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Education First:
Building Americas Future
The Fifth Annual
State of American Education Speech

Seattle, Washington
February 17, 1998

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Good morning. It is my great pleasure to come to Seattle, here in the glorious Pacific Northwest to give my fifth State of American Education Address. It is also a pleasure to listen to the inspiring words of Barbara Morgan, whose love of education clearly defines who she is and what she is about.

Barbara Morgan's exploration of space continues the great American adventure and quest for knowledge that led Lewis and Clark to cross the Rockies and row down the salmon filled Columbia River in 1804 to reach the Pacific Ocean at what is now the southern tip of Washington State.CHECKBOX Barbara Morgan will take our hopes and dreams into space with her. But as she reminded us so eloquently, the American adventure in space begins by placing value on teaching and learning.

Governor Locke, Senator Murray, the many members of Congress who are with us today -Norm Dicks, Jim McDermott, Linda Smith, and Adam Smith; Terry Bergeson, Washington's determined Superintendent of Public Instruction; Seattle's dynamic superintendent John Stanford; Mayor Schell and Ron Sims; my good friend retired General John Shalikasvili, ladies and gentlemen.

We are joined here today by educators from Alaska to California including Norma Paulus, Oregon's chief educator, and thousands of Americans at over 150 down link sites across America, including my home town of Greenville, South Carolina. This speech is being webcast on the Internet as well.

In the fall of 1870, on the comer of 3rd Avenue and Madison Street, which is now the center of downtown Seattle, Ms. L.M. Ordway opened the first public school in Seattle. When Ms. Ordway asked her children to pick up their slates and McGuffey readers way back in 1870 1 do not think that she could have imagined Slate journal -an on line Internet magazine published here in Washington. We live, my friends, in a world where knowledge is exploding all around us -- where trillions of bits of knowledge move in nanoseconds across the World Wide Web.

Consider, in 1969 there were just four primitive web sites in this world. By 1990, there were 333,000. Today, there are almost 20 million. How many will there be in the year 2000? It's all quite extraordinary. Scientists can land the Sojourner space vehicle on Mars with pinpoint accuracy. At the same time, a cloned sheep named Dolly is chewing her cud in Scotland while world leaders ponder the implications for humankind.

Expanding the horizons of knowledge and giving our children the power to use that knowledge wisely are at the very center of this new Education Era. We can

EA 028 920

2 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

not sit still rooted to the chalk board and pencil at a time when a 12-year old can literally touch his or her mouse pad and travel from web site to web site around the world.

This is why I am so encouraged by the vibrancy and growing spirit of innovation that comes with charter schools, new technology in the classroom and the demand for higher achievement. At the same time, American education has a deep responsibility to pass on to the next generation the essential elements of good citizenship and mastery of the basics as a stepping stone to more advanced skills.

And this I know for sure -- we are in a new time with new challenges -- and none is more important than this: never has this nation been confronted with the task of teaching so much to so many while reaching for new high standards -- that is the state of American education and America's first challenge.

This is an extraordinary and demanding time for our nation's schools and I ask all Americans to pitch in. Our nation is prosperous and working hard for peace. Surely this is the right time to be optimistic, to roll up our sleeves and get serious about winning America's war on ignorance.

At the same time, we have to contend with a narrow strain in American thinking that casually seeks to dismiss public education as a value from another time. Instead of seeking solutions, these people see only problems. Instead of seeing opportunity, they see only failure.

My friends, if ever there was a time to rally around our nation's schools, it is now. We have so much to do. We have more children in our nation's classrooms than ever before and each year they become more crowded. Our children speak more than 100 languages, eager as they are to learn English. They start kindergarten with high hopes but too many come unprepared.

Reading scores are not where we want them to be. And while we do a very good job at teaching math and science in the early years, we begin to drift in the middle years and fall behind the international standard of excellence.

Drug use is down slightly among teenagers but our vigilance must never end. And we cannot rest when every day another 3,000 young people start smoking. Think about the consequences 1,000 of these young people will die as a result of tobacco related illnesses. Middle schools are ground zero in the battle to protect children's health.

Other trends bear watching. The Hispanic dropout rate remains stubbornly high. Schools are beginning to crack down on violence and disruption. The "street" is not an option, so alternative schools are on the increase. This development is very close to me. Classes for one alternative school are held by my senior staff twice a week. We try to keep in touch with the real problems that face many of our schools.

Eighteen states, from Vermont to Texas, now require schools to issue their own report cards detailing student achievement. This makes good sense to me and I encourage it. Why not every state? Parents ought to know about reading and math scores, safety, and the school's candid assessment of their own "state of education."

As I visit schools around the country I see a renewed interest in arts education and a growing concern about the negative impact of cutting art and music out of the curriculum. The creativity of the arts and the joy of music should be central to the

education of every American child.

As we seek to address these many challenges, let's recognize that when we Americans get serious about something and focus on it we usually succeed. That is why today over 60 percent of all graduating high school seniors now go directly to college and 25 percent of all college freshman have taken Advanced Placement courses.

The "gender gap" is closing in large part because of a federal civil rights law called Title IX. As a result, the United States now leads the world in giving women access to higher education and American women continue to excel in athletics. Now that the American women's ice hockey team has won the gold in Nagano, you can give some credit to Title IX.

Another accomplishment -- new, high standards are here to stay. Five years ago the debate about raising achievement levels was very much up in the air. Today, this debate should be settled.

Every state in the union is in the process of adopting rigorous academic standards and challenging assessments. Washington State is a national leader in this effort. All 50 states are receiving Goals 2000 funds to raise standards in their own way. This commitment to high standards should not be underestimated. This is a fundamental change in the very structure of American education. I applaud it -- our children are smarter than we think.

Milestones in higher education also deserve our attention. Last year, President Clinton took the bold step of asking the American people to consider two very big ideas: one -- that every American has the financial support needed to attend at least two years of college; two -- that we find a way to give every citizen the incentive and opportunity to learn for a lifetime. Congress responded in strong bipartisan fashion. The result: the $1,500 Hope Scholarship and a 20% Lifelong Learning tax credit worth up to $ 1,000 this year and $2,000 in a few short years. These two ideas are as significant to today's students as the G.I. Bill was to returning veterans.

Every American should be thinking about taking full advantage of these new opportunities. Go back to school. Learn a new skill. Take a course at your community college. Finish that degree.

The Congress also supported the President's call to increase Pell grants for low income students to $3,000, the largest increase in two decades. Pell Grants are the heart of student financial aid. We propose to increase Pell Grants again this year along with TRIO and work-study.

Now what else must we do to build America's future and get American education moving forward?

President Clinton in his State of the Union message noted that we have the finest system of higher education in the world. Yet too many of our young people show up at college unprepared. This is why the President went on to say that now is the time to "make our public elementary and secondary schools just as good by raising standards, raising expectations and raising accountability." This makes so much sense.

When we think about going to college all of us conjure up the image of high school seniors taking their SAT's and filling out college applications. The truth of the matter is really this -- preparing our children for college and the 21st century

begins when a child is born if not earlier. That is an extraordinary statement.

Early Childhood Development: Food for the Brain

New research on the development of the brain tells us that children develop much of their learning capacity during their first three years of life. These remarkable new findings help us understand how brain development in infants actually occurs and what parents can do to help it along.

Every mother and father, every grandparent and caring adult needs to know that they can have an enormous influence in shaping a young child's future. When we sing softly to an infant -- and read slowly to them -- and coo with them -- we are in fact developing their brain power.

Other research tells us of the consequences if parents do not provide a nurturing environment. We now know that as early as first grade there is already a year's difference in achievement levels among children who enter our schools.

In response to this important research on brain development and parental involvement, President Clinton has proposed the single largest national commitment to child care in the history of this nation, including a $3 billion Early Leaming Fund.

In Georgia, Governor Zell Miller is offering free pre-school to every 4-year old child and he is proposing to give every new mother and father a "Beethoven for Babies" C.D. He is making the point that good music is food for the brain.

In North Carolina, Governor Jim Hunt has created "Smart Start," which is a model of excellence for parents who want some pre- school learning activities for their children. In Illinois, Governor Jim Edgar is doubling his state's funding for early childhood education. Thirty-seven states now support some form of pre-school for children. Why not fifty? Let's give parents the help they need.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

Helping children develop is the first step to starting our young people on the path to college. What are the others? In my opinion, mastering the basics is the absolute precondition for a quality education. You can't do much of anything if you lack the ability to read.

This is why I am so encouraged that 36 states are committed to making sure that every child in this nation can read well and independently by the end of the third grade if not earlier. Governor Gary Locke has made reading a priority and I thank him for his effort.

I am pleased to tell you that 915 colleges and universities are supporting the America Reads Challenge by encouraging their work- study students to become reading tutors and mentors. Twenty- eight colleges and universities here in Washington are now part of this growing effort. But there is so much more to do.

Two years ago, when I began this national effort to improve literacy, I asked the nation's literacy organizations, from the American Library Association to the Girl Scouts to develop a reading guide for parents.

Today, I am releasing this guide entitled "Checkpoints for Progress." The guide offers parents examples of the reading skills that their children should have developed by each grade and tips for how parents can help their children become

better readers.

Reducing Class Size

Helping children to be good readers goes to the very heart of President's Clinton's new $12 billion class size reduction initiative that will add 100,000 well trained teachers to our nation's teaching corps. Common sense tells you that when children are in big classes they don't get the individual attention they need.

This is why we want to lower the average class size to 18 in grades one through three. Reducing class size improves discipline and raises student achievement. More individual attention by teachers early on can help all children and especially those with learning disabilities and other special needs.

One of the great drawbacks to a quality education in America is our tendency to categorize, label and even stigmatize children. America's schools should not be a place where we "sort" our young people into those we assume will achieve and those we assume cannot cut it.

Adopting high standards for all of our young people, including the disabled and those who struggle with poverty, is a statement that no child should be forgotten or left behind. This is a very fundamental change.

In the past, two federal programs that were targeted to help the disabled and the disadvantaged -- IDEA and Title I -- used a watered down curriculum. They assumed that many of these children could not achieve. Not any more. Today, I am proud to say that Title I and IDEA are turning around; in the future these children will be challenged to reach for high standards.

The success of any effort to reduce class size ultimately depends on the quality of the teachers and giving teachers the support, time and tools to succeed. If passed by Congress, this class size initiative will be a wonderful opportunity for current teacher aides to become trained and fully certified as teachers.

States have to do their part as well and make a much more vigorous effort to raise their teacher standards. This is a demanding and exhausting profession and we cannot expect to get good teachers "on the cheap." At the same time, we must expect teachers to stay current in their field and teach to the highest standards.

Modernizing Our Schools

If you reduce class size it makes good sense to build more schools and modernize old ones. America's schools are simply wearing out at a time when we face many years of record breaking enrollment.

In Miami they start serving lunch at some schools at 9:30 in the morning because of overcrowding. In Boston they are trying to put 21st century technology into 19th century school buildings. In Los Angeles, they have to bus kindergarten students out of their neighborhoods because there is literally no space.

This is why I urge Congress to support the President's call for a new $22 billion school construction initiative to help communities modernize schools and build new ones. Parents are tired of seeing their children go to school in portable classrooms with no windows and they are tired of watching playground space shrink or disappear.

If this school construction initiative is passed, Washington State can borrow $204

million dollars interest free. Seattle would get an additional $32 million dollars interest free. This would free up more local funds to modernize and build more schools.

My friends, Congress needs to act this year. This is an American problem, and it requires an American, not a partisan, response.

As we build new schools, let's also make sure that they are wired "smart." That is why the Federal Communications Commission established the E-rate, a new $2.25 billion fund available each year to make sure that every school -- public, private and parochial -- and every library will get the technology they need to teach for the future.

Funds from the E-rate will provide an average discount of 60% for all telecommunications services and up to a 90% discount for very poor schools. This is so important. There is a growing concern as we enter the new century that the technology gap will worsen. The E-rate is the best way to make sure that all students in all schools have access to technology.

And there is not a moment to be lost in making sure that America's teachers are up to speed and really know how to integrate technology into their lesson plans. We really ought to be past the time when many students know more about computers than some of their teachers.

Finally, I make a special appeal today to America's senior citizens to support local school bond issues. My wife Tunky and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary last year. We have 8 wonderful grandchildren and the ninth is on the way. These children are a joy to both of us.

Now, I know that a great many senior citizens go out of their way to volunteer at schools. There are some older Americans, however, who have raised their own children and are now reluctant to support the building of new schools. I ask all senior citizens to think this out. See your "yes" vote on school bonds as another patriotic contribution to building America's future.

All of the many efforts about which I have spoken -- from early childhood development and the role of parents -- to modernizing our schools -- all of these are part of a growing American consensus to put education first. This mainstream agenda can be the foundation for building America's future if we keep at it and don't lose our focus.

Imagine what this wonderful nation can achieve in the next century if every 4-year old has the opportunity to develop his or her learning skills -- every 8-year old can read well -- every 12-year old can use the Internet -- and every 18 year old is truly prepared to go to college.

Public Support for Voluntary National Tests

If we are going to be successful in preparing our young people to step into the future we must have higher expectations for our children, a commitment to high standards and real accountability.

This is why I support voluntary national tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Urban school districts like Seattle that signed up to participate in these voluntary national tests ought to have that opportunity. Parents in America should have the right to know if their children have mastered the basics during these critical periods.

When it comes to the 3-R's, I am a conservative and I think most Americans join me in this view. The truth of the matter is that state standards are very important and improving, but they vary dramatically. The result -- parents in many states think their children are learning what they need to know and that is not always the case.

Voluntary national tests in reading and math would be a powerful tool for change in the hands of parents, principals and teachers. These tests are not just a test of our children but a test of this nation's resolve -- will we make sure that every child has mastered the basics of reading and math?

I believe that the American people want these national standards of excellence and are waiting for the Congress to "catch up."

Vouchers Divide and Undermine Public Education

To lift up student achievement, we must deepen our commitment to public education and not be distracted by vouchers. Some Americans believe that vouchers -- and only vouchers -- are the solution to all that ails American education. My experience has convinced me that the cynics are wrong -- the American people believe in public education, and they are eager to work together to improve it.

When almost 90% of all of our children are attending public schools, it doesn't make a lot of sense to me to use public tax dollars to pay for private school education. I am a strong supporter of private and parochial education. These schools have existed since the founding of this nation and they continue to represent a vibrant source of strength today.

I believe, however, that going down the road toward vouchers would ultimately make these schools less independent and less religious -- and that would be a serious mistake in my judgement. I encourage the growing dialogue between public, private and parochial schools. Each has something to offer -- the discipline of school uniforms, the strength of a core curriculum, or the rich experience that public schools have gained in educating and including the disabled.

The Dogmatism of "Either/or" Thinking

The emerging American consensus on education of which I have spoken is growing stronger every day. I believe it will continue to move forward if we are willing to address the peculiar habit we have of getting stuck in the rut of what I call "either/or thinking."

It's hard to build America's future and put education first when so many debates in education are tinged by a growing sense of rigidity that I find troubling. Sometimes people seem to be hunting for ways to disagree.

Whether it is the current math debate in California, the 30 year debate over school prayer, or the long running debate over phonics vs. whole language -- this unhealthy habit of thinking in dogmatic ways does our children little good.

My friends, we need to step back, lower our voices, truly listen to each other and search for common ground. Healthy debate is essential if we are to advance the future of American education. I respect any parent, teacher or concerned citizen who cares enough about the education of our children to voice their opinion. Too often, however, people are choosing sides instead of choosing solutions.

Let me give you an example. For thirty years the debate about school prayer was cast in stone. One side fervently believed that children should be required to pray in school without regard to a child's religious belief. The other side made every effort to keep any discussion about religion out of the classroom. Both sides, over time, reduced the majesty of the First Amendment to sound bites.

Two years ago, President Clinton sought a third way and came forward with new guidelines on school prayer that have done so much to defuse this debate and find common ground. All sides came together and contributed to finding this solution. I believe we should follow this good example and invest more of our energy in finding common ground.

This is why I want to encourage current efforts by various education groups to end the "reading war." Most children need some combination of phonics and reading comprehension and the emphasis has to be put on what works best for each child.

We must do a much better job of preparing teachers to teach reading well. And this I know for sure, the most important thing we could do to revolutionize American education would be to have a parent read with his or her child at least 30 minutes a day.

I also urge a "cease fire" in the growing math debate about whether adding and subtracting should be emphasized over solving more complex problems. The answer is both, but there must be balance and there must be results.

My friends, we need less ideology and more geometry, less dogmatism and more algebra, and there is nothing "fuzzy" about either of these two subjects. This is why I urge America's middle schools to start teaching some algebra and geometry by the 8th grade. These two courses are the stepping stones to trigonometry and calculus and rigorous science subjects like chemistry and physics.

This is common practice in every developed country in the world and our children are up to the task. The children here at Eckstein Middle School, a school with a diverse student population, prove the point. Every 8th grader takes some algebra -- science is never on the back burner -- and 75% of these children are taking foreign language instruction, from Japanese to Spanish.

In his own way Seattle's Bill Nye, the "Science Guy," who is with us today is the kind of teacher who gets young people excited and engaged in science and math. This is so important. Hundreds of thousands of information technology jobs are going unfulfilled because we don't have enough skilled workers.

Middle Schools: A Turning Point in the Growth of a Child

Now, most Americans just roll their eyes when you start talking about teaching in a middle school. One parent described his 8th grader to me as "hormones in sneakers." But the truth of the matter is that these young people "in the middle" are creative, eager, and inquisitive, and middle school teachers are challenged and love to teach them.

How can we help? We can begin by putting a new focus on the importance of children "in the middle." These pre-teens are making first choices about sex, drugs, and tobacco. Young people who make good choices discover a purpose in life -- and move forward.

But the temptation to experiment is very real. Children who spend more than ten

hours at home alone during the week are more than twice as likely to use drugs regardless of their race, income or ethnicity. This is particularly true for young people who do not have a good relationship with their parents.

This is why we are supporting General Barry McCaffrey's $50 million dollar effort to put many more drug prevention counselors in middle school. This is also why we ask for your support for a new $200 million effort to expand after-school activities.

We want to encourage community and school partnerships that engage young people's creativity and energy and keep them safe as well.

I intend to increase our support for service-learning and character education. I am excited about giving middle school students the opportunity to practice democracy through efforts like "Project Citizen."

Character education helps young people think through their choices in life and find strength in basic American values. Good citizenship starts early. My late father used to tell me that the highest compliment that you could give a person would be to call them a "good citizen."

Creating New Partnerships for Public Schools and Higher Education

My friends, the ability of our children to grow up to be good citizens and go on to college depends on some new thinking about public education and our nation's great system of higher education. We cannot build America's future when America's two systems of education remain so disconnected.

The concept of partnership is essential to creating stronger links between all levels of education including our nation's middle schools. Here, I want to stress two ways that higher education can strengthen public education and in doing so strengthen itself. America's system of higher education has to take a searching look at how it is preparing the 2 million teachers we need in the next ten years. What we are doing now simply isn't good enough.

We can't complain that our nation's high schools are sending too many of their graduates directly into college remedial classes and ignore the fact that the process of how we prepare America's teachers is remarkably disjointed.

Our colleges of education cannot continue to be the "forgotten step children" of American higher education. We need more rigor, more practice, and a much greater attention to grounding of new teachers in the pedagogy of their chosen profession. Teaching teachers really has to be the mission of the entire university.

I ask students at all levels, including recent college graduates, to consider teaching as a career. The pay is not great, the hours are long, the children can be demanding, but one child at a time you can literally change the world.

I also urge our nation's colleges and universities to vigorously expand their efforts to establish new "pipelines" that encourage many more minorities to go to college and to prepare them to reach the high standards needed for college success.

Some Americans don't go to college, but every American has to aim high and learn for a lifetime. There are wonderful school-to- work, tech prep, and cutting edge vocational education initiatives that are giving many more Americans the skills for tomorrow -- and getting them thinking about college. Your Tech Prep

Consortium here in Seattle is a wonderful example of such a new and exciting partnership.

For those young people who want to go on to higher education we are proposing a new initiative called "High Hopes for College" to spur them along. High Hopes is very much in the spirit of the University of Washington's "Pipeline Project" and its "Early Scholars Outreach Program" here at Eckstein.

Consider this fact. Low income students who take gateway subjects like algebra and geometry are almost three times as likely to attend college. Unfortunately, too many of these young people never take these courses because they do not even think that college is an option in their lives.

This is one reason why we propose to create 2,500 new partnerships between middle schools and America's colleges and universities to get many more young people on the academic track to go to college.

I believe that diversity matters a great deal in higher education. Affirmative inaction is not the answer. When we learn with each other, from each other and about each other this coming together strengthens our democracy. Vice President Gore may have said it best recently when he said, "diversity is not an idea or agenda; it is a fact of our world."

I was in Richmond, California last Friday and had the opportunity to visit the Adams Middle School, which is part of the Berkeley Pledge program. The Berkeley Pledge was started two years ago by then Chancellor Tien at U.C. Berkeley. Chancellor Tien was confronted by a sharp drop in minority admissions and a growing sense of racial discord. People were once again choosing sides instead of solutions.

In response, Chancellor Tien put a down payment on the future by taking $ 10,000 out of his own pocket to start the Berkeley Pledge. His goal was to forge a new partnership between local public schools and his great university; to give students who have never been exposed to the rigor of college prep courses the chance to raise their sights. Today, this program is successful and even has the support of critics of affirmative action.

Math scores are up at every grade level. More minority students are better prepared to meet the rigorous standards set by Berkeley. And as Bob Berdahl, the new Chancellor at Berkeley, told me this effort has given these young people, "shining new aspirations" of what they can achieve. The Berkeley Pledge is an example of how a great university can raise standards, open the door to college to those who have been excluded, and encourage racial conciliation. Finding ways to heal racial division is the work of the President's Initiative on Race and all of us can make a positive contribution.

The Berkeley Pledge contributes to racial reconciliation because it sustains two important American principles. If you set high standards for everybody, you have to keep them. At the same time, every effort ought to be made to help people meet those standards, and this is especially true for those Americans who have never had a history or a chance to rise up.

My good friend, who is with us today, General John Shalikasvili, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, knows first hand that this principled approach to excellence has made the American military not only the finest fighting force in the world but also the most equal and integrated.

Conclusion

So now, my friends, let me close by urging each and every one of you to help build America's future. Invest in our children. Give young people who want to soar like Barbara Morgan the grounding and security of a quality education that prepares them for the 21st century.

Let's win this war on ignorance and make the education of all of our children this nation's first priority. Please find the solutions that strengthen this new American education consensus by reaching for common ground.

Our democracy can only be as strong as the education of our people in these new and challenging times. The power is in the people. If we truly educate the American people and unleash their creativity, our democracy will flourish in so many new ways.

This is America's first challenge and with your good help, we will succeed.

Thank you.

-###-

[Return to Speeches & Testimony page]

Last Updated -- February 19, 1997. (pik)